



Peggy Pattison

Managing the Organization CCC.....Constant Change Chaos

Poor Middle Managers – Change Sandwiches!

In 1991 I was hired as a sales trainer with a Fortune 500 bank in the Midwest to help roll out “relationship banking” – a then huge paradigm culture shift for all employees. This training culturally shifted the role for which bankers had been hired. Their entirely new role was to “sell” and most employees had not hired on to do so! What transpired over the next decade was not only the employee role shift but also constant mergers, acquisitions, and downsizing of staff on a regular basis. As a performance-development trainer from top leaders to front-line employee, I witnessed manager-to-employee frustration, anger, resistance, and just about any other change emotion that could be imagined.

We all thought that once these changes took place, the entire workforce would eventually settle down into the high productivity of the changes we expected!

In the meantime, I became a middle manager and learned first-hand that I was a virtual “club sandwich” of change. I was caught in the middle to be eaten from the top by senior management if I didn’t initiate changes I didn’t understand, or eaten by my employees if I didn’t take them through change quickly and deftly. Through desperation, I became a Change expert.

As managers and employees throughout the 90’s, we believed that business would eventually get back to “normal” and changes would calm down. We, managers, even attempted using "boxed" programs as a training tool to help employees come to terms with change; but in fact, nothing was to prepare managers or employees for the pervasive feeling that change and chaos were underfoot most of the time! Employees and some managers lost confidence, loyalty and heart for their jobs.

It’s Getting Back to “Normal” in the new Millenium– Not!

December 7, 2005...headline in Crains’ Chicago Business, “Ford may cut 30,000 jobs, close 10 plants”, December 9, 2005, Chicago Business “Albertson’s sale could

split Jewel/Osco stores; Chicago Sun-Times, January, 4, 2006, “Change at top signals new era for Dow Jones”, and now, Josephine Rossi, in T + D Magazine, January 2006 reports in “Organizational Change on the Rise”.....

CONTINUOUS CHANGE might be the future of business worldwide, according to the results of a survey conducted by technology and research-consulting service eePulse and the University of Michigan.

The September 2005 Leadership Pulse surveyed 379 senior executives from around the world. The data collected indicated that 79 percent of the firms studied were going through high levels of organizational change. Also, trend data from 2004 to 2005 showed that the amount of change organizations are experiencing continues to steadily climb.....

Theresa M. Welbourne, founder of the study, explains, “continuous change is, no doubt, the wave of the future; however, research indicates that for organizations to thrive in high-change environments, they also must provide employees with an ability to cope with change.”

Unexpected Organizational Change for Managers

Exacerbating the organizational change challenges above, Managers/Leaders are also facing a new, unexpected challenge: How to manage, Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen-X, and “Generation Why’s” all at the same time?

When reading “Scenes from the Culture Clash” in the January/February 2006 article in Fast Company Magazine and “Young, Female, and Demanding (Companies struggle to understand Gen-X’s lack of servility) in January, 2006, Inc. Magazine, we read that Gen-Xers and Millenials, sometimes called “generation whys” are an entirely different management challenge never before facing Managers.

Success Formula = Managing Change Chaos

As Theresa Welbourne says, ...that for organizations to thrive in high-change environments, they also must provide employees with an ability to cope with change.”

Employees can’t and shouldn’t learn change on their own. Key is the Manager’s role in helping each, individual employee through the change process. It is a skill that can and must be learned by every manager in organizations today.

Sending employees and leaders to “Change Management “classes just won’t do it! I trained Change Management classes throughout the 90’s until I was breathless. First, we know from research that only 20-30% of what gets taught in a training class ever transfers back to the job (Dana Gaines Robinson, Training Transfer) and that if the content isn’t coached and reinforced, within 30 days, 90% of that 20-30%

is lost! In other words, without the Manager's key support and influence, only 10% of anything an employee hears in a training class ever applies on the job. Yet, organizations spend millions on band-aid training believing that they will help employees cope with change. I am a strong proponent of development programs, but they must be strongly connected to ROI and measurable by management.

Managers now and in the future will only survive the Organizational CCC's if they are skilled, knowledgeable, and address "feelings" of their employees in a highly democratic way, called participative management/leadership style. These participative managers/leaders also must have very clear and democratically negotiated performance standards, performance metrics, 360 feedback, continuous improvement measures.....all negotiated from the bottom-up.....not as we have historically gotten them from traditional organizations; that is, top-down.

Bully Management Won't Work

Many unenlightened organizations and leaders, some of whom we even witness on TV, believe that ruling by fear and intimidation is a way to gain employee commitment and transformation....wrong! Research tells us that such management works very short term. If there is a fire in the building, this is a great management style!

Great organizations and leaders, as identified in many best selling books today, follow the principles of "participative, power-through-knowledge management practices." Business and organization survivors and thrivers in the new millennium of the Organizational CCC's will have well-developed, enlightened management staff who totally understand the participative formula.

About the Author:

Peggy Pattison, former college professor of business, gained her practical, 20+ years expertise in performance development while leading large teams and Coaching Sr. Leaders of employees in Fortune 500 Companies through the dynamics of mergers/acquisitions, downsizings, reorganizations, and restructures. She is the author of KISS Performance Solutions,,,,,Management/Leadership Training Series.

Peggy Pattison, Author, Speaker, is currently one of America's top performance coaches. Get her FREE Report: One POWER Formula to SUCCESS at <http://www.PeggyPattison.com>.

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